

# THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Andy Hoac

Volunteers at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge.

## The New Year Is Here— It's Time To Restore

Every year from September through May, volunteers from all walks of life don gloves, dig in the dirt, yank out weeds, and plant native vegetation at one of Golden Gate Audubon's four habitat restoration sites. These teams of volunteers, including Golden Gate Audubon members and supporters from local communities, schools, and corporations, are enhancing habitat for resident and migrating birds and other wildlife. In 2009 more than 600 volunteers worked at Golden Gate Audubon's four habitat restoration sites, investing a staggering total of almost 1,900 hours of their time to improve native habitat in the Bay Area.

Many populations of resident and migratory birds continue to decline in the Bay Area and throughout North America, primarily because of habitat destruction and degradation. Habitat restoration is the process of transforming a degraded area into a self-sustaining condition capable of supporting wildlife. Golden Gate Audubon and many other groups in the Bay Area are working year-round to restore sites to provide adequate habitat, in the hope of stemming the precipitous declines in certain wildlife populations and bolstering the resiliency of Bay Area ecosystems to the effects of climate change.

Golden Gate Audubon's members have been engaged in habitat restoration around

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## The Big Year Is Back

The Golden Gate National Parks contain more endangered species than any other national park in continental North America and there are specific things you can do to help them recover.

The GGNP Endangered Species Big Year is back with a new suite of endangered species for you to see and help save, a new set of recovery actions, and a new set of prizes. The official kick-off event will be on January 9 at 1 p.m. at the Sports Basement in the Presidio in San Francisco. After a brief ceremony, along with free drinks and snacks, we'll take a short hike to view Western Snowy Plovers from the fence line at the Crissy Field Wildlife Protection Area.

For those who want to get a head start, we'll be joining forces with the San Francisco Bike Coalition for a morning bike ride to the kick-off, touring the Presidio to search for some of the more elusive marine species, like the Southern Sea Otter and the Marbled Murrelet.

Since the 2008 Endangered Species Big Year, when over 14,000 Bay Area residents participated, more species have been added to the park's list. The park is now known to contain the Black Abalone, North American Green Sturgeon, and Myrtle's Silverspot butterfly, among other wondrous plants and animals. The expanded list brings mixed feelings of celebration and concern. We are fortunate to live in a

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Nature Store hours: Monday - Friday, 9 - 12, 1 - 5

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# The Power of Counting Birds

**G**olden Gate Audubon has a long and proud history of citizen science. Christmas Bird Counts and breeding bird surveys are just two of the citizen science programs to which Golden Gate Audubon members have contributed over the past several decades. If you have participated in any of these projects, you too are a citizen scientist.

Broadly defined, citizen science occurs when volunteers collect data and monitor wildlife and plants. Often, the volunteers have no formal scientific training, and they provide the information gathered to professional scientists for collation and analysis. By working with volunteers, scientists at organizations such as the Point Reyes Bird Observatory and the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory are able to collect more data across broader areas and over a longer period of time.

Many of you joined me in December 2009 for Golden Gate Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Counts in San Francisco and the East Bay. CBCs have been conducted in San Francisco since 1915 and in Oakland since 1938. The rich information collected through these counts has provided ornithologists and biologists with invaluable long-term data on the impacts of urban growth on local bird populations. Christmas Bird Count and breeding bird survey data collected by our members contributed to Audubon California's February 2009 report regarding the projected impacts of climate change on bird populations in California.

Citizen science projects combine the enjoyable pastime of recreational birding with an opportunity to work with experts and contribute to regional and national data sets for birds. We get to do more than just add a bird to our life list; we can record changes in bird populations and help identify conservation priorities. Every day, we at Golden Gate Audubon depend on information transmitted to us by citizen scientists throughout the Bay Area.

The Christmas Bird Counts are only one of many citizen science opportunities for Golden Gate Audubon members. In San Francisco, "Lights Out" volunteers look for birds that have collided with downtown buildings. On the southern San Francisco waterfront, surveys provide information about the how birds rely on old piers and other structures slated for demolition. At Ocean Beach and Crissy Field, Dan Murphy, Matt Zlatunich, and others monitor threatened Western Snowy Plovers. Additional projects include monitoring Bank Swallows near Fort Funston and herons, egrets, and cormorants at Lake Merced. In 2010 we will expand our citizen science projects to include studies at Candlestick Point State Recreational Area and additional surveys at Lake Merced.

In the East Bay, volunteers continue to monitor Western Burrowing Owls at Cesar Chavez Park and endangered California Least Terns at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. We are also building on our extensive volunteer-driven studies of the birds of the Eastshore State Park and the North Richmond shoreline with new studies of land birds and other species along the San Francisco Bay Trail. All the data are transmitted to local, state, and federal agencies to improve the management of wildlife throughout the Bay Area.

There is no doubt that these data provide an important resource for scientists and directly contribute to the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. I am proud of Golden Gate Audubon's tradition of citizen science and invite you to join us in the field in 2010.

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

## New Board Member

Golden Gate Audubon is pleased to announce the appointment of a new board member, Michael Lozeau. Michael is a partner in the law firm of Lozeau/Drury, LLP, and was recognized in 2003 by the *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine* as a Top 25 Bay Area Lawyer. Michael is a former staff attorney and lecturer in law at Earthjustice and the Stanford Law School, as well as a former board member and executive director of San Francisco Baykeeper. Welcome, Michael!



# CONSERVATION CORNER

## GGA SUPPORTS PRESIDIO MARSH RESTORATION

In comments submitted to the Presidio Trust, Golden Gate Audubon voiced support for an exciting plan to create new wetlands and to daylight a stream that currently flows through a culvert into Crissy Marsh. The site—more than nine acres in the northeastern portion of San Francisco's Presidio—is part of the area where the new Doyle Drive access to the Golden Gate Bridge is being constructed. The restoration, to be completed concurrent with the Doyle Drive project, will provide native habitat for marsh and upland birds.

For detailed information, go to [www.presidio.gov/trust/projects/quartermaster.htm](http://www.presidio.gov/trust/projects/quartermaster.htm), which has a link to a map of the marsh restoration, the preferred alternative of three proposed plans. Golden Gate Audubon is one of several San Francisco groups in the Presidio Environmental Council, and we support maximizing the ecological restoration in the Presidio.

## ALTAMONT WIND POWER RESOURCE AREA PUBLIC MEETING

The Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Stakeholder Group is holding its first annual public meeting to hear presentations and review data regarding the operation of wind turbines and their effects on birds in the Altamont Pass. The meeting will include discussion of replacing old turbines, which tend to be more dangerous for birds, with newer, more efficient turbines that may kill fewer birds. The public will have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments, and we encourage everyone interested in

this issue to attend and speak up. The meeting will be held on January 20, 6:30–8:30 p.m., in Livermore at the Martinelli Event Center, 3585 Greenville Road.

## FOCUS ON THE BURROWING OWL

At the upcoming 38th California Burrowing Owl Consortium, individual speakers and representatives from community-based groups will present their latest findings on the challenges and opportunities in maintaining or increasing the existing population of the Western Burrowing Owl. The event, on February 6, will be held at the Martinelli Event Center, 3585 Greenville Road, Livermore. The registration fee of \$25, includes lunch, opens on January 4. Checks made out to the Alameda Creek Alliance should be sent to Alameda Creek Alliance, c/o Rich Cimino, 1281 Ridgewood Road, Pleasanton, CA 94566. For the consortium agenda, visit [www.burrowingowlpreservation.org](http://www.burrowingowlpreservation.org) or [www.scpborg.org](http://www.scpborg.org). People interested in making presentations should contact Rich Cimino at [rschimino@earthlink.net](mailto:rschimino@earthlink.net).

Western Burrowing Owls, as many as five, are continuing to occupy the northeast corner of Cesar Chavez Park near the Berkeley Marina, where Golden Gate Audubon volunteers installed protective fencing and signage last fall. Docents monitor the wintering owls and show them to park users.

## NEW CHANGES FOR BERKELEY'S AQUATIC PARK

The Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department has initiated changes at the 25-acre Aquatic Park, a productive and popular birding destination. The department will begin a program at the park that includes tree trimming, vegetation removal, and new plantings. The goal is to reduce the accumulation of trash and human waste and the trampling of vegetation caused by people using this part of the park for drug use, sexual activity, and encampments. Under the new plan, smaller shrubs will be planted near the roadways, and larger bushes and trees near the lagoons, with the intention of eliminating most of the



*Black-crowned Night-Heron, a year-round resident at Berkeley's Aquatic Park*

sheltered "dens" that people use for illicit activities, while providing good bird habitat. Golden Gate Audubon has met with city staff and is optimistic that the project can work for wildlife, but we need to monitor and critique the work as it proceeds.

A separate project, the Aquatic Park Improvement Project, is intended to alter the connections between San Francisco Bay and the park's lagoons, to improve the water quality and habitat for fish and plant life as well as birds. Golden Gate Audubon commented on the initial plans for this project and will continue to participate by reviewing environmental and planning documents.

If you are interested in these projects and are willing to help with either one, contact Phil Price, chair of the East Bay Conservation Committee ([phil@creekcats.com](mailto:phil@creekcats.com)).

## SHARP PARK DECISION IMMINENT

In November 2009, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department released a report proposing three alternatives for the future of Sharp Park, the golf course in Pacifica operated by the city of San Francisco. Sharp Park is inhabited by two federally listed species—the threatened California Red-legged Frog and the endangered San Francisco Garter Snake. Many

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 4

## Inaugural Golden Gate Audubon Birdathon

Join birders and nature enthusiasts from May 15 through May 23 to document Bay Area birds and raise funds for Golden Gate Audubon. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information about how to get involved.

**CONSERVATION CORNER** continued from page 3  
environmental groups, including Golden Gate Audubon, advocate restoring the wetlands and transferring the property to the Golden Gate Recreational Area for the establishment of a new national park (see *December Gull*, page 1). One alternative, favored by Phil Ginsburg, general manager of Recreation and Parks, maintains the park as an 18-hole golf course, which provides the least habitat for the two species and puts them at further risk. The report also fails to accurately account for significant costs of operating, maintaining, or improving the golf course, which has been losing money for years.

On November 19, the Recreation and Park Commission voted to refrain from acting on the department's recommendation and instead allow more time for public comment and scientific review. However, the commission may have decided to vote on an alternative as early as December 2009. Check the Golden Gate Audubon website and [www.restoresharpark.org](http://www.restoresharpark.org) for updates and for actions you can take that will help protect wildlife at Sharp Park.

#### GREAT ANNUAL BACKYARD BIRD COUNT MARKS 13TH YEAR

Golden Gate Audubon invites birders of all levels to participate in the 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, February 12–15, sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. You can count for as little as 15 minutes or as long as you like during the four days—in your backyard or in a local park or other location. Scientists use the

#### BIG YEAR continued from page 1

biologically diverse landscape, but when so many species in our most protected urban landscape are on the brink of extinction, it is time to reflect on our relationship with this land.

You can do this by participating in the 2010 GGNP Endangered Species Big Year. We will organize explorations to see these species in the park and conduct recovery

#### Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

##### PEREGRINE FALCON (\$500 TO \$999)

Mary & John Price

##### THIASI TERN (\$200 TO \$499)

Phil Cotty, Patricia Greene, Arlene V. H. Lee, Craig A. & Martha S. Spriggs, Edward F. Walsh

##### CLAPPER RAIL (\$100 TO \$199)

Scott Benson & Elana Swartzman, Robert K. & Barbara Brandriff, John N. Brenneman & Karen O'Rourke, Ronald L. & Rosemary Clendenen, Patricia E. Coffey, Linda A. Deaktor, Linda Marie Griffith, Pansy Kwong, Marilyn & David Nasatir, Peter Ralston & Pattie Litton, Carla & R. Rugeroni, Shirley & Farrel Schell, Jean C. Thomas, Ruth Tobey & Alan Tobey

##### GIFTS (TO \$99)

Nancy J. Buffum, Cornelia A. Foster, Mary Margarite Golden, William Jackson, Carolyn Jones-Weinberger, Yoko Jung, C. Bruce Lee, Bethhellen Levitan & Raymond Trautman, Frawley J. Lynch, Frederick & Peggy Munich, Cordelia A. Neal, E. Sayre, Joseph W. & Sally M. Small, Sheridan & Elizabeth Warrick, John Zimmermann

##### IN KIND DONATIONS

ACLU of Northern California for event space

Arizmendi, baked goods for MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline workday

Josiah Clark of Habitat Potential for oak trees for Harding Park

##### EMPLOYEE GIFT MATCH

Pacific Gas and Electric

information from this and similar surveys, such as the Christmas Bird Counts, to track changes in the population and distribution of winter birds. You can help by counting the birds where you live. To participate, go to [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). You'll find detailed instructions as well as forms for submitting your data and handy checklists to use in the field.

#### JOIN A CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Meet other birders and wildlife enthusiasts on your side of the bay and find out about projects in your community.

The East Bay Conservation Committee meets the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Golden Gate Audubon

office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. For further information, contact chair Phil Price at [phil@creekcats.com](mailto:phil@creekcats.com).

The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum, located at 199 Museum Way ([www.randallmuseum.org](http://www.randallmuseum.org)).

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge meets the third Monday of the month. For time and location, contact cochair Leora Feeney at [leoraalameda@att.net](mailto:leoraalameda@att.net).

#### Benefit Lecture for the International Bird Rescue Research Center

On the evening of January 28, the IBRRC's charismatic executive director, Jay Holcomb, will highlight the advances in saving wildlife from myriad calamities. You will be inspired and amused when you hear his stories from the frontlines. The event is cosponsored by Golden Gate Audubon and the Oakland Zoo, where the lecture will be held. For more information, including time, go to [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org).

expeditions where we can pitch in to help these species recover. The person who sees and helps save the most species by the end of the year will win a \$1,000 grand prize.

Think you can claim the prize? Go to [www.wildequity.org](http://www.wildequity.org) to find out about the kick-off event and to join the competition.

— Brent Plater, Executive Director,  
Wild Equity Institute



# SPEAKER SERIES

JENNIFER ROBINSON MADDOX, COORDINATOR

## The Raptors Around Us

San Francisco: Thursday, January 21

7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 p.m. program

Mild climates and relatively abundant food sources make our part of the world an inviting and hospitable place for raptors the year around but especially in winter. Please join Eddie Bartley for a fast-paced photographic journey and discussion of Northern California's resident and visiting birds of prey.

Along the way, he will explore some recent theories about the familial relationships, as well as the adaptations in response to changes in climate and habitat, of one of our most fascinating group of birds.

Eddie, a member of Golden Gate Audubon's Education Committee, has taught many courses on ornithology for a variety of groups around California. He is an active volunteer and citizen scientist for Golden Gate Audubon, the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, and the Hungry Owl Project. Eddie is a founding partner of Nature Trip, a San Francisco-based company that specializes in wildlife- and bird-watching, natural history, and photography field trips. He is an author and the principle photographer of the field guide *100 Birds of Heron's Head* and has been published in a number of scientific journals including the "Pacific Raptor Report." His photography has appeared in *Bay Nature* magazine, the *Presidio Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as well as *The Gull*.



Male (left) and female Northern Harriers

**San Francisco Speaker Series:** First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary. Visit [www.uusf.org/visitors\\_faq.html](http://www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html), and use the Map It! link on the left for directions. Public transit, street parking, and parking in a lot for a fee are available.

## Looking Up with Ease

Berkeley: Thursday, February 18

7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 p.m. program

Does your neck hurt after a day of birding? Would you like to be more comfortable using binoculars? Jane Gray, a physical therapist and Feldenkrais practitioner, will guide us in a series of gentle movements designed to support looking up. This exploration in sitting and standing will teach us how to use the whole body to support the use of the eyes and neck.

Jane, who has many years of experience in movement re-education, is a certified practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method, which helps people become more aware of and gently alter how they move in habitual ways. Her interest in wildlife has led her to the study of birds, and her interest in movement has led her to the study of how people watch birds.

**Berkeley Speaker Series:** Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: [www.northbrae.org/directions.htm](http://www.northbrae.org/directions.htm).

## Volunteer Opportunities and Events

Sunday, January 10, 9 a.m. – noon

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Help us prepare breeding habitat for the endangered California Least Terns. Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of the former Alameda Naval Air Station in Alameda. (Please check the GGA website for the February date).

Sunday, January 17 and

Saturday, February 6, 9 a.m. – noon

Pier 94 wetlands restoration workday. As part of our ongoing efforts to restore wetlands along San Francisco's southern waterfront, we will continue weeding the wetland and working on the new upland plots. Join us and see what birds have come back to the wetland. Refreshments provided.

Saturdays, January 16 and February 20, 9 a.m. – noon

White-crowned Sparrow Habitat Restoration Project. Join other passionate volunteers in restoring habitat along the historic Bison Paddock in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Volunteers will plant natives, weed established sites, and help nurture this site for local sparrows. Closed-toed shoes and

layered clothes recommended. If you are part of a group of five or more volunteers, please RSVP to [kimberly.kiefer@sfgov.org](mailto:kimberly.kiefer@sfgov.org)

Monday, January 18, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Annual MLK Day event. We will work with the East Bay Regional Park District to clean up as much trash as possible on the day that celebrates the park's namesake, Martin Luther King Jr. We expect 500 people or more. For this event, please park at Peppermint Gate. Overflow parking will go to the Damon Slough Staging Area. Refreshments provided.

Saturdays, January 23 and February 27, 9 a.m. – noon

TogetherGreen Volunteer Days. Join us for monthly workdays at Harding Park in San Francisco. We will continue to weed out invasive radish and other plants that have infiltrated the restoration area. Refreshments provided.

For updates on these workdays and for directions, visit [www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer). Questions? Please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox, Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer Coordinator, at [jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org).





# FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org).

## Jewel Lake in Tilden

*Golden Gate Audubon Society*

Fridays, January 1 and February 5,  
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156, [philajane6@yahoo.com](mailto:philajane6@yahoo.com)

We continue our monthly first Friday trips at Tilden. Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile, 2-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Winter birds will have arrived, and we'll look for waterbirds on both Jewel Lake and Lake Anza. A scope would be useful for seeing ducks on the lakes. Rain cancels.

## San Francisco Botanical Garden

*Golden Gate Audubon Society*

Sundays, January 3 and February 7,  
8 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, [allanrid@pacbell.net](mailto:allanrid@pacbell.net); Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall

Meet at the front gate of the garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of the park has several microhabitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This monthly trip is oriented toward

helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds.

## Palo Alto Baylands and Mountain View Shoreline

*San Mateo County*

Saturday, January 9, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Dan Murphy, [murphsf@yahoo.com](mailto:murphsf@yahoo.com)

The wetlands, marshes, and open waters at Palo Alto and Mountain View are among the richest bird habitats on San Francisco Bay. Levees and boardwalks overlooking the marshes, mudflats, and open water make these excellent sites to view 60 to 80 species that winter in the South Bay. Ducks, shorebirds, waders, gulls, raptors, and many more provide an ideal birding experience. Meet in the parking lot on the right side of the road at the gate just before the duck pond near the Baylands Preserve. Wear clothes appropriate for cold, wet weather. If it has been raining, wear boots or waders, as the levees can be muddy. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain will not cancel the trip.

From Hwy. 101 in Palo Alto (just south of the Dumbarton Bridge), exit at Embarcadero Rd. East. Stay to the right and be careful not to end up on the Oregon Expressway. Drive east over the freeway to the end

of the street, turn left, and continue to the gate just before the duck pond

## Consumnes River Preserve

*San Joaquin County*

Sunday, January 10, 9 a.m.

Rusty Scalf, [rscaif@sonic.net](mailto:rscaif@sonic.net)

The Consumnes is a small river, a mere 80 miles long, that meanders freely in the Central Valley just south of Sacramento, along one of the remaining tracts of old-growth riparian forest left in the valley. The preserve's wetlands are extensive. We'll also find woodland birds. Meet at the preserve's visitor center on Franklin Blvd. Dress warmly and bring lunch and liquids. Trip ends in early afternoon.

Take I-80 east to I-50 and then the I-5 (south) exit to Twin Cities Rd. (marked with a binoculars sign for wildlife viewing). This area is about midway between Stockton and Sacramento. At the Twin Cities Rd. exit, go east for exactly 1 mile to the first stop sign. Turn right onto Franklin Blvd. and continue for 1.7 miles. The visitor center is on the left side of Franklin. The parking lot is just past the visitor center. To view a map, go to [www.consumnes.org](http://www.consumnes.org).

## Corona Heights

*San Francisco*

Fridays, January 15 and February 19,  
8 – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Brian Fitch; Dominik Mosur, [polskatata@yahoo.com](mailto:polskatata@yahoo.com)

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at the end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

## Quarry Lakes, Alameda Creek, and Coyote Hills

*Fremont and Alameda Counties*

Monday, January 18

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,  
[kathy\\_jarrett@yahoo.com](mailto:kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com)

Meet the leaders at 9 a.m. on the east side of the Fremont BART station in the parking lot for this all-day trip on the MLK holiday. Trip ends at BART between 3 and



Cackling Geese, seen individually or in small groups in the Bay Area in winter

Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

4 p.m. We will see birds from the time we step off the BART train and will experience various habitats: urban, marsh, and bayside. The total distance is 24–30 miles mostly on paved bike trails. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids for a picnic at Coyote Hills Regional Park. Dress for variable weather. Rain cancels. Reservations are not necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated.

Transit: BART is not on a holiday schedule on MLK Day; go to [www.transitinfo.org](http://www.transitinfo.org) for the schedule. The Fremont train passes through MacArthur at 8:08 a.m. Bikes are not allowed on the Pittsburg/Baypoint train to SFO line at this time. Car: From I-880 to Fremont, take the Mowry Ave. exit east toward central Fremont and go 2.3 mi. on Mowry. The Fremont BART parking lot is on the east side of the station past Civic Center Dr.

## Sausal Creek

**Saturday, January 23, 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

Mark Rauzon, [mjrauz@aol.com](mailto:mjrauz@aol.com)

Join Mark and the Friends of Sausal Creek for a bird-monitoring field trip in the Sausal Creek watershed. Eight sites will be visited, each for a 10-minute stationary count. The area to be covered extends from the Sequoia Arena turnoff from Skyline Blvd. to the Dimond Park restoration area, to the lowlands and the Fruitvale bridge where Peregrine Falcons are setting up territory. The group will hopscotch by car, and participants can linger at some sites, but Mark will move quickly to be done by 1 p.m. Meet at the Sequoia Arena parking lot off Skyline Blvd., almost across from the Chabot Space and Science Center.

## Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

**Wednesdays, January 27 and**

**February 24, 9:30 a.m. – noon**

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,  
[hilary@powersedit.com](mailto:hilary@powersedit.com); Ruth Tobey,  
510.528.2093, [ruthtobey@earthlink.net](mailto:ruthtobey@earthlink.net)

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. This should be another peak winter month at Lake Merritt. Come see all

## Field Trip Leadership Program in San Francisco

Leading field trips is a very rewarding experience! In this unique, interactive course, Eddie Bartley will discuss the fundamentals of leading a successful field trip with a focus on using stories about the natural history of the San Francisco Bay Area to entertain and educate trip participants. The program consists of an evening presentation in San Francisco on Thursday, February 4, 7 to 9 p.m., followed by a field trip on Sunday, February 7, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., to many of the birdy and natural areas of San Francisco. At each stop on the field trip, we will provide information on the natural features and past and current conservation issues while observing and listing the fauna we encounter.

Fee for the program is \$100, which will be refunded after participants lead their first two field trips for Golden Gate Audubon in 2010. To reserve your space or for further information, contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox, GGA Volunteer Coordinator, at [jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org) or 510.919.5873.

Sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm not only enhances the lives of Bay Area residents but can inspire them to take positive, informed action on local environmental issues.

our regular visitors and, with luck, a few surprise wanderers, too.

Take the 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into the park on Perkins. Best parking is at the boathouse lot near the spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays.

## Panoche Valley

**Sunday, January 31, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

Chris Carpenter, [cgbirds64@comcast.net](mailto:cgbirds64@comcast.net),  
510.547.2201

Panoche Valley is mainly private property, so we will bird from the roadside to look for the specialty birds found here, such as Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Chukar, Greater Roadrunner, and Lewis's and Acorn Woodpeckers. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Meet in Paicines, at the junction of Hwy. 25 and County Rd. J1. Paicines is 13 miles south of Hollister. Make sure you have gas and food, as Hollister is the last gas station in this direction. We will tour Panoche Valley, ending at I-5 and Little Panoche Rd. Rain cancels.

## Wintering Raptors and Waterfowl

**Saturday, February 6, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Terry Colborn, 916.705.8991,  
[tlcgdc@aol.com](mailto:tlcgdc@aol.com)

The open agricultural lands of southern Solano County provide excellent forag-

ing habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the nearby Yolo Basin Wildlife Area are the winter home for thousands of waterfowl, including ducks, geese, swans, and many shorebirds. This trip will visit several local habitats in search of wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Burrowing, Barn, and Great-horned Owls; and Long-billed Curlew, as well as the elusive and threatened Mountain Plover. We also expect to see a representative sampling of waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area, also known as the Vic Fazio refuge. Meet at 8 a.m. in Dixon, in the southwest corner of the Wal-Mart parking lot located on East Dorset Dr. at the Hwy. 113 exit off I-80. Bring lunch and liquids, dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels.



## Eastshore State Park

**Monday, February 15**

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,  
[kathy\\_jarrett@yahoo.com](mailto:kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com)

Meet the leaders at 8:50 a.m. at El Cerrito Del Norte BART Station (BART is on holiday schedule for President's Day) or at 9:20 at the end of S. 51st Street in Richmond; there is a spur from the SF Bay Trail to this point. We will bird along the SF Bay Trail from Richmond to Berkeley and

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 5

end at University Ave. and I-80 in Berkeley. High tide at Pt. Isabel is at 12:22 p.m. Shorebirds and ducks should be seen on this trip. Bring bicycle lock, sunscreen, and liquids. Bring lunch or purchase at the Seabreeze Market. Bicycle helmet required. Participants must have the stamina to dismount frequently and have the ability and experience to bicycle safely on city streets. Rain cancels. Reservations are not necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated.

Car: To reach S. 51st Street, take the Bayview exit from I-580 north and turn left to cross west over the freeway. Turn left on Seaport and then immediately left on S. 51st Street. Go to the end and park on the street. Entrance to a short spur to the SF Bay Trail starts here. If you are concerned about security, park at Point Isabel and ride north on the trail about .75 mile to meet the group. BART schedule: [www.transitinfo.org](http://www.transitinfo.org).

## Sacramento River Delta Boat Trip

Antioch, El Cerrito, Antioch

**Saturday, February 20, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**  
Bob Lewis, [bob@wingbeats.org](mailto:bob@wingbeats.org)

Spaces may still be available on this trip on board the comfortable *Delphinus* for a wonderful day of exploring the rich habitats and meandering channels of the Sacramento Delta. We can expect to see thousands of Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, White-fronted Goose, and Canada Goose, and myriad ducks, and will also look for overwintering and resident raptors. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. Trip is

## Come Out and Meet GGA's Bay Trail Docents

Docents with our Birding the Bay Trail program are stationed along the San Francisco Bay Trail in the East Bay from the Albany mudflats to the Richmond Marina. The teams of volunteers are equipped with scopes to show trail users the abundant birdlife and are eager to share other information about the area, from the local plants to the local history. To see when our knowledgeable docents will be on the trail, please check our volunteer page and online calendar at [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org).

limited to 30 participants. Cost is \$80 for Golden Gate Audubon members, \$90 for nonmembers. To reserve space and make payment, contact Stephanie Strait, GGA Office Manager, by Friday, January 16, at 510.843.2222 or [ggas@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:ggas@goldengateaudubon.org). Participants confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina, the departure point.

## Eastshore State Park

Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

**Saturday, February 27**

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,  
[kathy\\_jarrett@yahoo.com](mailto:kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com)

Meet the leaders at 9 a.m. at the Emeryville City Marina. Shorebirds and ducks should be seen on this one-way trip birding the Eastshore State Park from Emeryville to Richmond. High tide in Berkeley is at 10:21 a.m. Options for returning include bicycling, taking BART from Richmond or El Cerrito Del Norte, or taking Amtrak from Richmond. Reservations are not necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated. Please indicate how you plan to arrive and return.

Bring sunscreen, lunch, and liquids. Food and drink may be purchased at Amini's store/café at Richmond Marina Bay. Bicycle helmet required. Participants must have the stamina to dismount frequently and have the ability and experience to bicycle safely on city streets. Rain cancels.

From Ashby BART, bicycle west on Woolsey, which becomes 66th St. after crossing Sacramento St. At San Pablo Ave., jog left to 65th St. and continue west to Shellmound and then turn left to Powell St. Cross to the south side of Powell and follow the sidewalk west, passing under freeway. Cross back to the bicycle lane and continue to the end at the Emeryville City Marina. Take extreme care crossing freeway exits and entrances. Go to [www.transitinfo.org](http://www.transitinfo.org) for BART schedule.

## Pinnacles National Monument

San Benito County

**Sunday, February 28, 9 a.m.**

Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936, [rscalf@sonic.net](mailto:rscalf@sonic.net)  
Pinnacles National Monument is a release site for the endangered California Condor, and the birds can sometimes be seen from hiking trails throughout the park. Meet at the Visitor's Center in the first parking lot on the left after you enter the

east side of the park from Hwy. 25. Email leader for more information or go to [www.nps.gov/pinn](http://www.nps.gov/pinn).

## Honey Lake

Lassen County

**Saturday–Sunday, March 20–21**

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
[davequady@att.net](mailto:davequady@att.net)

We will search Lassen County for Greater Sage-Grouse, Bald Eagles, and other wintering birds of the Eastern Sierra. This trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader; reservations open up at noon on January 25. Detailed directions will be provided to those who are confirmed on the trip. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is available in the Honey Lake State Wildlife Area. Plan to bring warm clothing, lunches for both days, and a scope if you have one. Carpooling is encouraged.

## Yosemite National Park

**Friday–Sunday, June 4 – 6**

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
[davequady@att.net](mailto:davequady@att.net); Dave Cornman

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in late May and early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of bird life, typically including seven flycatchers (three *Empidonax*), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage.

This trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader; reservations open up at noon on February 22. Past participants have found it convenient to camp at Hodgdon Meadow in the park (reservations necessary, as the campground fills up fast), or to stay in campgrounds or commercial lodgings outside the park's Big Oak Flat entrance. Detailed information, including meeting times and locations as well as lodging suggestions, will be provided to those who are confirmed on the trip. Confirmed participants should bring warm clothes, rainwear, and rubber boots for wet meadows, as well as lunches for Saturday and Sunday. Participants should be prepared to walk about 3 miles each day. Carpooling is encouraged.





With the last of the fall migrants trickling through, birders settled into the familiar winter birding patterns: ducks, geese, raptors, and sparrows. Plenty of interesting birds sparked the annual question: will they stay around until the Christmas Bird Count?

### LOONS TO DUCKS

Upper Crystal Springs Res., SM, provided a rare freshwater sighting of a Red-necked Grebe on Nov. 28 (RT, LB). A Nov. 15 pelagic trip to Cordell Bank, MRN, reported 2 Laysan Albatrosses and 5 Short-tailed Shearwaters (RS, oob). A seawatch from Pigeon Pt., SM, on the 21st recorded 16 Northern Fulmars and 9 Black-vented Shearwaters among the more common near-shore species (RT).

The SCL bayfront from Palo Alto Baylands to Salt Pond AI produced scattered sightings of up to 3 Cattle Egrets and 4 White-faced Ibis (mob). Two Tundra Swans splashed down at Pescadero Marsh, SM, on Nov. 13 (GS). White-winged Scoters were reported from a number of coastal locations, with a high count of 24 from Pescadero Marsh on the 16th (GH). Bayside, White-winged Scoter pairs cruised ALA Pt. in ALA Nov. 10–13 (HW) and then San Leandro Marina, ALA, Nov. 15–20 (KB; SF, PG). The region's sole Black Scoter was reported on the 21st from Pigeon Pt., SM (RT).

Long-tailed Ducks made the news on the 2nd at Ocean Beach, SF (PS); on the 10th at Tomales Bay, MRN (JE); and on the 16th near Charleston Slough, SCL (BB; mob). An unusual concentration of 26 Hooded Mergansers gathered on the 29th at the Radio Rd. ponds, SM (AD).

### RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

A hawk watcher at Battery Godfrey in the Presidio tracked a Rough-legged Hawk across the Golden Gate, SF, on the 14th (PS). A lone Sandhill Crane flew into Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, on the 29th (WL). Land-based observations of the Red Phalarope passage noted 66 southbound birds off Pigeon Pt. on the 7th (RT).



Palm Warbler at D'Anna Yacht Harbor, Oakland

Winter gull-watching season kicked off on Nov. 14 with a Glaucous Gull off Battery Godfrey (PS) and a Black-legged Kittiwake at Crissy Field in SF (LK). The Cordell Bank pelagic trip tallied 10 Black-legged Kittiwakes and 5 Ancient Murrelets (RS, oob). An Ancient Murrelet lingered offshore at Sutro Baths, SF, Nov. 16–18 (AH; BF).

### DOVES TO THRASHERS

Barred Owl range expansion continued apace with a sighting on Nov. 13 from Annadel SP, SON (BD). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was ID'd on Nov. 16 on the SON State Campus, Rohnert Park (AK). Red-naped Sapsuckers turned up on Nov. 4 in Vacaville, SOL (DB; JL); on the 13th near L. Merced, SF (RG); and on the 26th along L. Del Valle, ALA (SH). A Tropical King-

bird provided a Halloween treat to birders at Pillar Pt. Harbor and Princeton Marsh, SM (JB; mob). Another Tropical Kingbird ventured out to PRNS Lighthouse, MRN, on the 3rd (BM; JM). Mountain Bluebirds were reported from 6 locales in eastern ALA, CC, NAP, and SOL, with a high count of 30-plus blue gems Nov. 16 along Patterson Pass Rd., ALA (SC, CL).

### WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Warbler movements trickled to 2 Palm Warblers, starting Nov. 4 at D'Anna Yacht Harbor, Oakland, ALA (MR, mob) and Nov. 21 at Año Nuevo SR, SM (RT). Best bird this month was arguably an American Tree Sparrow, which joined the sparrow flock at Ellis Cr. Water Recycling Facility, Petaluma, SON, on the 19th (RR). A couple Vesper Sparrows visited a fennel patch on SON Mountain Rd., SON, on the 25th (RS).

The molting Lark Bunting remained at Bixbee Park in Palo Alto, SCL, through the 10th (mob). A late Grasshopper Sparrow popped up at Tolay Cr. Ranch, SON, on the 7th (PC, AL, LN, AC). High tides flushed a Nelson's Sparrow at Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, Nov. 1–3 (KS; BB, BR, MM) and at Heron's Head, SF, on the 14th (TO, DM).

Visitors to a private horse stable in Portola Valley on the 28th were surprised to find a flock of 1,000-plus Tricolored Blackbirds (RT, LB). Finally, Yellow-headed Blackbirds turned up in the blackbird flocks at Bayfront Park in Menlo Park, SM, on the 3rd (RF) and at Deniz Dairy along SON Mountain Rd., SON, on the 26th (CT).

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Rod Thornton for helping compile Observations data.

**Abbreviations for Observers:** AC, Andy Compari; AD, Al Duerson; AE, Art Edwards; AH, Alan Hopkins; AK, Andy Kleinhesselink; AL, Andy Lacasse; BB, Bill Bousman; BD, Bill Doyle; BF, Brian Fitch; BM, Bunkie Mangum; ER, Bob Reiling; CL, Carol Lombardi; CT, Chris Traub; DB, David Bell; DM, Dominik Mosur; GH, Garth Harwood; GS, Gary Strachan; HW, Harry Wilson; JB, James Barnes; JE, Jules Evens; JL, Jim Lomax; JM, Jeff Mangum; KR, Kathy Robertson; KS, Ken Schneider; LB, Leonie Batkin; LK, Logan Kahle; LN, Len Nelson; MM, Mike Mammoser; MR, Mark Rauzon; PC, Peter Colasanti; PG, Phil E. Gordon; PS, Paul Saraceni; RF, Rick Ferrick; RG, Rob Garrock; RR, Ruthie Rudesill; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; SF, Stephanie Floyd; SH, Steve Huckabone; SL, Steve Lombardi; TO, Trent Orr; WL, William Legge.

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve.



# CLASSES

## ALBANY ADULT SCHOOL

Spaces may still be available in the following classes held in the East Bay. Class fees and registration information are on the AAS website: [www.albanyadultschool.org](http://www.albanyadultschool.org).

### Bay Area Birds

Six Wednesdays, January 6 – February 10, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus five Saturday or Sunday morning field trips and one weekend trip following the last class

Waterfowl have arrived in the Central Valley, and shorebirds line our coasts. Songbirds inhabit the oaks, and winter visitors have returned from the mountains. Join an enthusiastic group to learn to identify Bay Area birds. For more details, including field trip locations and bird lists from previous years, go to [www.wingbeats.org](http://www.wingbeats.org).

### Birding by Ear

Four Thursdays, February 4 – March 4, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, February 6 – March 6, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. (Note: No class or field trip the week of February 15.)

Birds communicate by making a variety of sounds all year long, even in the middle of winter. This class will focus on bird sounds heard at this time of the year in our area. We will learn to locate and identify birds by chips and calls and will also identify the songs of some species that are now starting to sing.

### Beginning Bird-watching

Four Wednesdays, February 24 – March 17, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, February 27 – March 20, 9 – 11:30 a.m. Winter is a time of bird abundance in the Bay Area and is an ideal season for beginners to get close to many species for clear viewing. Classes introduce bird-watching basics, including field guides, optics, and how to look at birds in order to identify them.

## Joe Morlan's San Francisco Classes

Evening classes taught by Joe Morlan and endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon start in early February. The classes meet from 7 to 9:15 p.m. at Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore (free parking is provided). Optional field trips may be arranged for weekends. Preregistration is advised; a \$10 discount is given for registering a week early. For fees and other details, go to <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/spring10.htm>. Register online at [www.evolveview.com/ccsf](http://www.evolveview.com/ccsf).

**Field Ornithology I** meeting on Tuesdays, is an introduction to birds and birding. Part A (EA101) starts February 9 and ends

## GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON

The following classes are offered by Golden Gate Audubon and held at the GGA office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. To register, call 510.843.2222.

### California Raptors in Winter

Thursdays, January 7 and 14, 7 – 9 p.m., plus two all-day Sunday field trips, January 10 and 17 (Note: Inclement weather may cause trips to be rescheduled.)

Spaces may still be available in this new class focusing on the evolutionary adaptations and life histories of California's hawks, eagles, harriers, kites, and falcons. Presentations include information specific to resident, migrant, and seldom-seen vagrant raptors. On field trips to Point Reyes and the Sacramento Delta, we'll have opportunities to concentrate on raptors, but will not ignore the myriad other birds that call California home during the winter.

### North American Owls

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, February 16 and 17, and February 23 and 24, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus three weekend evening field trips tentatively planned for February 19 – 21, February 26 – 28, and March 5 – 7

Seldom seen but often heard, owls hold a fascination for many birders. Learn what makes an owl different from other birds and how to identify owls by sight and sound, as well as gain an understanding of their habits and habitats. Classes will be illustrated with slides and with the sounds of these birds of the night. On field trips, we'll attempt to hear and see some of the species discussed in the lectures. Dave Quady is the author of the owls section of National Geographic's *Complete Birds of North America* and a frequent field trip leader for Golden Gate Audubon. The class is limited to 20 on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign-ups begin at noon on Monday, January 11.

March 23; Part B (EA105) starts April 6 and ends May 18.

**Field Ornithology II** on Wednesdays, is a study of the identification and status of North American land birds, including woodpeckers, flycatchers, shrikes, and vireos. Part A (EA110) starts February 10 and ends March 24; Part B (EA115) starts April 7 and ends May 19.

**Field Ornithology III** on Thursdays, covers waterbirds including diving ducks, grouse, quail, loons, and grebes. Part A (EA120) starts February 11 and ends March 25; Part B (EA125) starts April 8 and ends May 20.

the Bay Area for decades. As we start the new year, we're highlighting our four restoration sites and encouraging you to join us to experience habitat restoration firsthand.

#### PIER 94: "POCKET" HABITAT

Penelope Watson first came to Pier 94 on San Francisco's southern waterfront three years ago for the annual fall Coastal Cleanup. At the time, Golden Gate Audubon held only three workdays per year at the four-acre wetland in the Bayview/Hunters Point neighborhood. Since then, Penny has enthusiastically participated in our ongoing restoration efforts at Pier 94. "I live in San Francisco," she says, "and this site has great potential as a pocket restoration area. Pier 94 has great views and is still a working waterfront with consistent 'banana belt weather.' I am amazed that the birds come with a bit of encouragement. I was hooked."

Penny is one of nearly a dozen volunteers who are now hooked on this site and attend as many workdays as they can. Some, such as volunteer Betty Berenson, are so enthusiastic about the restoration that they come out on their own even when workdays are not scheduled. Betty has single-handedly tackled the Yellow Star Thistle, removing this invasive weed from the Pier 94 uplands. She also visits regularly to check on the American Avocets during breeding season and to

observe migrating Red-necked Phalaropes, her favorite. Noreen Weeden, Golden Gate Audubon's Conservation Project manager, welcomes anyone who is interested. "It's an opportunity to get outside and enjoy the fresh air." You will also get a chance to experience San Francisco's southern waterfront. Despite being surrounded by pavement, industry, and container ships, Pier 94 attracts Brown Pelicans, Black Oystercatchers, gulls, and terns—thanks to the restoration work of volunteers.

#### MLK JR. REGIONAL SHORELINE BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Our East Bay wetland restoration site near the Oakland International Airport is a birding hotspot. Clapper Rails and Sora emerge from the shoreline's Arrowhead Marsh at high tide, and hundreds of Marbled Godwits, Willets, and sandpipers congregate in the adjacent wetlands throughout the winter. As part of Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Education Program, students from nearby East Oakland schools have been planting native shrubs and grasses along Arrowhead Marsh to provide shelter for both shorebirds and landbirds.

Every month, we hold a workday when volunteers weed, plant, and mulch this area along the Arrowhead Marsh Trail. With the assistance of MLK shoreline Park Supervisor Ralph Trujillo, our restoration site is doing so well that we will now focus our efforts on the mouth of nearby Elmhurst Creek, one of several creeks that flow into San Leandro Bay. The creek is riddled with weeds and choked with trash, but with the stewardship of enthusiastic volunteers, we can restore this habitat for shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts, Marbled Godwits, and Willets.

#### ALAMEDA WILDLIFE REFUGE CRITICAL LEAST TERN HABITAT

Not a typical refuge, the Alameda Wildlife Refuge is located in a corner of the former Alameda Naval Air Station. To reach the refuge (open only on workdays), you must pass through a gate in the chain-link fence and sign in with Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge volunteer Joyce Larrick. Joyce sends you driving over decrepit, unused runways to the worksite. There, another



Workday at Pier 94, San Francisco

fence surrounds 9.7 acres of asphalt and vegetation—the nesting site of endangered California Least Terns.

The old asphalt airstrip may appear barren, but the refuge is host to at least 168 species of birds, including 24 species of breeding birds. In addition to the endangered California Least Terns, the refuge is an import roosting site for the California Brown Pelican and can host large flocks of plovers and shorebirds.

Volunteers work with Leora Feeney and other members of Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR) to clear weeds and refresh the nesting grounds with shelters for the tern chicks before April. The terns arrive by summer, when the site chatters with the sounds of terns tending their nests and bringing fish back to their young before both adults and juveniles depart in August. The Alameda colony is the largest northernmost colony and one of the most successful in the state.

Recognizing the colony's importance, many Alameda volunteers take advantage of its proximity. Time after time, people arriving for workdays tell Joyce at the main gate about growing up in Alameda and hearing about the site. They finally decided they would like to volunteer "in their own backyard." FAWR invites all interested volunteers, no matter where they live, to see the unique refuge for themselves.



Penelope Watson, who regularly volunteers to restore habitat at Pier 94.

## GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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**TIME TO RESTORE** continued from page 11

### HARDING PARK HOME ON THE COAST

Located at Lake Merced in San Francisco, the Harding Park Golf Course is not what you might expect to see in a habitat restoration site. Situated under exotic Monterey Cypress trees, the area where Golden Gate Audubon works, along the course's hole 10 at the top bank of East Lake, is dotted with native shrubs. The natives were planted to extend the coastal scrub habitat around Lake Merced, with the goal of attracting not only California Quail but other resident birds. Although managing the non-native

vegetation has been challenging, we are now focusing on enhancing a particular section by planting natives in fall and doing weeding and other maintenance in spring. As the new vegetation has matured, California Towhees, White-crowned Sparrows, Purple Finches, and other birds are using the site.

### HELPING BAY AREA BIRDS

All the restoration programs are on a drop-in basis, and we encourage you to come out, meet other volunteers, and—yes—put on gloves and dig in the dirt. If you value birds and are concerned about declining populations, especially in an urban environment such as the Bay Area, volunteering at a habitat restoration site is one of the best ways you can help. We always welcome newcomers and are happy to share what we've learned about native plants and wildlife with you during the workday. Don't forget to bring your binoculars so you can linger in the area for some birding.

—Jennifer Robinson Maddox,  
Volunteer Coordinator

### Get involved

Check out the upcoming schedule of workdays on page 5 and join us at one of these sites. For more information on where to go, please visit [www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer).

## GGA's Big Trips Offer Big Rewards

If you want to treat yourself to a birding trip outside the Bay Area, consider the upcoming trips designed especially for Golden Gate Audubon members. For detailed information, contact Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093 or [ruthtobey@gmail.com](mailto:ruthtobey@gmail.com).

GGA's trip to Oregon for spring migration combines two winning elements: the destination is the renowned Malheur Wildlife Refuge, and the leader is Harry Fuller. As of this writing, there are still a few spaces on this Memorial Day weekend trip. Price for this trip, still to be determined, will include a \$50 donation to Golden Gate Audubon.

The fall River of Raptors migration in Veracruz, Mexico, is one of nature's spectacles. On a good day, more than 100,000 migrant vultures and raptors are seen. GGA is offering a trip to Veracruz for the migration, October 2–10. The basic 9-day tour is \$2,100; an extended tour, through October 13, takes in Los Tuxtlas rain forest for \$2,650. Prices include a \$150 donation to Golden Gate Audubon.



Volunteers at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge enjoy a break